
LETTER TO THE EAST AFRICAN LIST COMMITTEE

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East African List Committee
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Three deletions from the avifauna of Tanzania

Britton (1980), when defining the status of East African birds, included three species which more recent information suggests should not have been admitted to the avifauna of Tanzania. I suggest that all three should be removed.

Grey-headed Lovebird *Agapornis cana*

Britton (1980) states that "the nominate race is said to have been introduced to Zanzibar and Mafia Island but there is no evidence of its occurrence since 1920."

In his review of the avifauna of Zanzibar and Pemba, Pakenham (1979) could find no justification for including this species. He quotes Neumann (1898) who only mentions Mafia for this species. The species was reported "in the wild state" up until about 1913 for both Zanzibar and Pemba (Mackworth-Praed & Grant 1973). However, it was probably never well established. Pakenham (1979) quotes Alders (1920, in Pearce 1920) who stated that the species frequented the garden of the British Residency but was otherwise scarce. It therefore seems likely that this species existed on Zanzibar for less than twenty years and during this period it is probable that more than one introduction was made. There are no records for Mafia other than Neumann's.

There have been many attempts to introduce this species to five other Indian Ocean islands and the African mainland at Natal (Long 1981). Despite repeated reintroductions they have mostly been unsuccessful (Forshaw & Cooper 1978, Long 1981). Even seemingly successful introductions in the Seychelles during the 1930s had undergone subsequent population crashes by the 1960s (Penny 1974). This species has not been included in the recent *Birds of Africa* (Fry *et al.* 1988).

There is no known documented evidence to suggest that this species was anything other than an unsuccessful introduction or escapee. It should therefore be deleted from the avifauna of Tanzania and East Africa.

Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri*

Britton (1980) includes this species in the introduced species category and it has subsequently appeared in the Tanzania Check-list published by the OSC of the EANHS. Britton states that small numbers of introduced birds (probably of the race *borealis*) were observed repeatedly on Zanzibar from 1936 to 1941 but that there is no subsequent record.

Pakenham (1979) included *P. krameri* but disputed the statement in Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1952) "that it is extending its range." There have been no records since Pakenham left the island in 1956 and several visits since 1980 have failed to locate this species. Being observed in small numbers over a period of five years, and with no proof of breeding, is, I feel, insufficient reason to include this species in the avifauna of Tanzania.

During the 1980s one, and occasionally two birds, have been observed in the mature suburbs of Dar es Salaam. However, they have failed to establish themselves and I cannot locate any records of successful or even attempted breeding.

Red-tailed Greenbul *Criniger calurus*

Britton (1980) states, with respect to Tanzania, "there is a single record from Bukoba in NW Tanzania." This record is that of Harvey (1979) who listed this species with several others as being observed in the vicinity of the Lake Hotel in Bukoba town. During my first visit to Bukoba on 10 February 1982 the habitat had changed little since Harvey's visit of 24 October 1970 and all the species mentioned by him were present except *C. calurus*. Sharing this habitat was a flock of Yellow-throated Leafloves *Chlorocichla flavicollis*—a species not mentioned by Harvey. I have visited Bukoba several times since 1982 and spent a number of days birding in the environs of the hotel. The mature garden habitat is an unlikely one for *calurus*. It is considered a strictly forest undergrowth species (Bannerman 1936) and of tangled patches of cover (Mackworth Praed & Grant 1973). There is no suitable forest in or around Bukoba town. The nearest large forest is Minziro some 40 km to the north west. This species was not collected by Andersen nor located during a brief visit in 1984 (Baker & Hirslund 1986). A more recent visit by several ornithologists, during which 400-odd birds were netted, also failed to locate *calurus*.

Harvey's description suits *flavicollis* better than *calurus*. The pale yellow throat of *flavicollis* can look white in poor light and the bird is more gregarious than the usually solitary *calurus* (Dr D. J. Pearson *in litt.*).

This is clearly a case of mistaken identity. The Red-tailed Greenbul should therefore be deleted from the avifauna of Tanzania.

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